



New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Celebration 2009: Hope-Sharing

Sue Klassen

85 people registered for Celebration, including 13 children. We filled the motel units, and had families or individuals in almost all the cabins. On numbers grew further on Sunday morning when the Lowville congregation joined us for worship and for Alan Kreider's moving message.

Through stories, Alan helped us see new ways to live and share our faith as missional people. Alan walked us through history from the 4th Century through today to help us understand the forces that silence us today, and to free us to live and explain the hope we have. In his final talk, Alan described hope-sharing as the heart of witness.

Workshops and free time on Saturday afternoon added to the sense of retreat.

During the Saturday morning Delegate session, the Delegates affirmed our new conference minister, Gene Miller, and elected

New positions on Coordinating Council (left to right): Moderator Sonya Stauffer Kurtz, Treasurer Dan Gallagher, Resource Advocate Kathy Shelly, Conference Minister Gene Miller, Secretary Joyce Combs



Photo by Sue Klassen



Photo by Dan Gallagher

Paddle boating on Beaver Lake four new members to the Coordinating Council (see photo at bottom left).

Thank you to our outgoing members of Coordinating Council: Terry Zehr, Harold Miller, Judy Shean and Sue Klassen. Gene Miller and Dale Beebee will continue on Coordinating Council.

Duane Davis has created audio DVD's of Alan's Saturday evening and Sunday morning talks, available at \$1 each. To order these, email Duane at ddavis@stny.rr.com Duane also led the Celebration '09 Planning Team. Thank you, Duane!

Thanks also to Corning's Worship Band who led us in worship each session, and in an extra time of song on Saturday afternoon.

Delegates Affirm New Conference Minister

Sue Klassen

During the Delegate Session at Celebration '09, the delegates affirmed Gene Miller as Conference Minister of New York Mennonite Conference following Coordinating Council's unanimous and strong recommendation.

Gene has served as Pastor at Yorks Corners from 1977 to the present, and was Camp Administrator at Penn-York Camp and Retreat Center from 1973 to 2006. Gene has served on our conference's Leadership Commission since 2002 and as an Overseer since 2004. He has served as Interim Conference Minister since LeRoy Mast's departure in Fall 2008.

Here is Gene's vision for the conference:

"God is calling us to become healthy congregations who experience a deep, missional transformation so that all we do is focused around the mission of God for our communities. Starting new churches may very well be one of the ways this transformation manifests itself in our conference.

"Core values for me are prayer and dependence on the Spirit. It is a privilege and a sobering responsibility to be asked in these challenging times to serve in this role. My wife Sharon and I ask for your regular prayers.

"I see many wonderful, gifted people
Continued on p. 2

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Congregational News

Edited by Kirk House

Jesus Church: Licensing Service

Linda Wright will be licensed for pastoral ministry at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 11 at the Jesus Church just outside Addison, NY. Light refreshments will follow the service. All are invited.

Chenunda Creek: Music Camp

Chenunda Creek Fellowship had a three-evening "music camp" for children on August 5, 6 and 7. During camp, the children learned basic music theory and made simple instruments which they played at Music Night, the following day. Music Night was preceded by a community chicken barbecue, an annual event during August at Chenunda Creek.

Yorks Corners: Encountering the Power of the Word

The congregation at Yorks Corners is reading through the New Testament in 2009 at an average of one chapter each day. The text of the Sunday sermon is from the readings for the previous week.

Pleasant Valley:

Elizabeth Weaver and Levi Weaver spent part of August on an 11-person work team at Victory Bible Camps in Alaska.

In the two weeks they were there, two rather large conference groups used the facilities which meant a continuous cycle of cleaning and re-cleaning taking place (not to mention constant helping in the kitchen!). Elizabeth tallied that she cleaned around 50 toilets, scrubbed about 30 showers, and cleaned endless sinks and bunks, not to mention many afternoons making Rice Crispy treats for 280 high school kids!

Alaska's beauty



Photo submitted by Elizabeth & Levi Weaver

New Coordinator for Prayer Network

Gene Miller

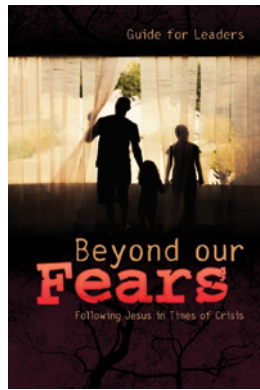
Prayer is an essential part of our conference life. Our desire is to encourage and facilitate prayer in every possible way. Dorothy Zehr has recently agreed to coordinate the New York Mennonite Conference email prayer communications. Her address is mdwzehr@yahoo.com Contact her so she can distribute prayer requests that are related to our conference and the wider church. This is not

intended to replace or duplicate the communication of prayer requests that are of interest only to your individual congregation. Our intent is that intercessors across the New York Mennonite Conference will unite in fervent prayer for general and specific needs throughout our conference. You are encouraged to also contact Dorothy if you want to receive these prayer requests.

Beyond Our Fears: New Resources

Sue Klassen

At Celebration, Alan Kreider drew attention to three related, new Mennonite Publishing Network books (described below) that can help us share the hope we have. These books sold out at our booksale, but are available at www.mpn.net



In *Beyond our Fears: Following Jesus in Times of Crisis* (\$5.99), author Pam Dreidger writes, "All of the media attention surrounding the Swine flu and unusual weather has raised anxiety levels. "What would happen in your

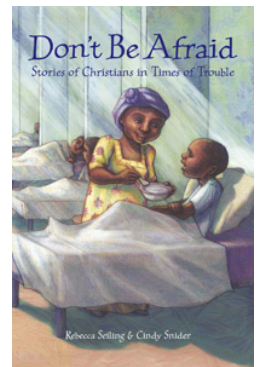
neighborhood or your church if an unusual number of people were hospitalized? What if a pandemic, a natural disaster, or an act of terrorism hit your community? Would you seek safety, or would you take risks in order to help others?"

The book of four biblical texts and true stories of how people responded to crises, is meant to be used with the separate *Guide for Leaders* (\$12.99).

The leader's guide, and the resources it accompanies, has been developed not to raise fears among God's people, but to do the exact opposite: to prepare us to shine as God's light

These resources were developed not to raise fears among God's people, but to do the exact opposite: to prepare us to shine as God's light in the midst of such crises

in the midst of such crises. It seeks to ensure that we will be people of healing and hope, not fear and self-preservation.



Congregational Resource Advocate Coordinator Kathy Weaver Wenger writes, "For me, the neat thing about the guide is that it has a section to be used with adults, one for youth, children's activities to go with the booklet, *Don't Be Afraid: Stories of Christians in Times of Trouble* [\$5.99, for ages 9-12], and . . . three worship services with additional congregational prayers for times of crisis! What a timely resource!"

New Conference Minister, continued from p. 1 serving God across New York Mennonite Conference. As Mennonites, we have good news for our neighbors across the state. God has uniquely placed our denomination with a living history of community, service, peace, and reconciliation as we live out our faith in daily life. Our Anabaptist forebears left us a legacy of evangelistic zeal and mission.

As the wind of the Spirit blows across our state, I believe that we will see God at work—let's believe Him to do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine".

Save the Dates:

Licensing Service: 4 p.m. October 11, Jesus Church

Leadership Seminar: February 5-7, 2010, RAMF